

Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 SS-20 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 USIA-15

ACDA-19 IO-15 OMB-01 DRC-01 EB-11 AGR-20 SCEM-02

SCI-06 INT-08 OC-06 NIC-01 /214 W

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P R 131750Z OCT 73

FM USINT CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4001

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 3094

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT EG

SUBJECT: EGYPT: INTERNAL SITUATION, OCTOBER 13, 1973

REF: CAIRO 3042

1. REFTEL STATED OUR BELIEF THAT EGYPTIANS HAD OVER-
COME A MAJOR PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIER WITH THRUST INTO
SINAI ACROSS BAR LEV LINE. THREE MORE DAYS HAVE
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PASSED AND SIGNS CONTINUE TO ABOUND THAT EGYPTIANS'

SENSE OF CONFIDENCE IS INCREASING.

2. THREE MAJOR FACTORS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS. FIRST, MUCH OF THE STIGMA OF THE SIX-DAY WAR ENDING IN DEFEAT SEVEN YEARS AGO HAS BEEN REMOVED BY THE PASSAGE OF THE SAME PERIOD OF TIME WITH CONTINUED VICTORIES BEING REGISTERED BY THE EGYPTIAN COMMAND. IN TRUTH, THESE HAVE BEEN MINOR IN THE LAST FEW DAYS; NEVERTHELESS, THE MERE FACT OF STEADFASTNESS ITSELF IS CONSIDERED A VICTORY. SECONDLY, EGYPT HAS SUFFERED LITTLE DURING PAST WEEK. ON FIRST DAYS OF WAR, IMPOSITION OF RESTRICTIONS ON SALES OF GASOLINE AND CERTAIN OTHER PRODUCTS, ALONG WITH SOME DISTRIBUTION BLOCKAGES, RESULTED IN SHORTAGES OF CERTAIN COMMODITIES SUCH AS SUGAR, RICE, MEAT, COOKING OIL, TEA AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS. THESE SHORTAGES FOR THE MOST PART NO LONGER EXIST. FOODSTUFFS HAVE BEEN RESUPPLIED TO COOPERATIVE AND OTHER STORES AND, WITH EXCEPTION OF SUGAR, ARE AVAILABLE FOR SALE AT CONTROLLED PRICES OR ON BLACK MARKET AT INCREASED RATES. BLACK MARKET ITSELF PROVIDES AN ECONOMIC SAFETY VALVE FOR COMMODITY RETAIL SYSTEM. RATIONING OF GASOLINE HAS DONE VERY LITTLE TO REDUCE CAIRO TRAFFIC; YESTERDAY AND TODAY, CAIRO STREETS WERE FILLED WITH PRIVATE AUTOMOBILES AND TAXIS. NORMAL CONGESTION IS REDUCED ONLY SLIGHTLY BY ABSENCE OF SOME TRANSPORT VEHICLES. ON OCTOBER 11 POL SUPPLIES WERE REPLENISHED THROUGHOUT THE CITY. THIRDLY, ANTICIPATED ISRAELI DEEP PENETRATION RAIDS HAVE NOT MATERIALIZED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO EITHER PLAY HAVOC WITH EGYPTIAN INFRASTRUCTURE OR TERRORIZE THE POPULATION. WHAT PUBLIC TRANSPORT HAS NOT BEEN COMMANDEERED BY THE MILITARY CONTINUES TO RUN ON MORE OR LESS NORMAL SCHEDULES. TELEPHONES TO MOST PARTS OF THE COUNTRY ARE OPERATIVE. COMMUNICATION TO OUTSIDE WORLD VIA TELEX AND TELEPHONE WAS INTERRUPTED FOR ABOUT SEVEN HOURS ON OCTOBER 11 BY DAMAGED CABLE (NOW REPAIRED) BETWEEN CAIRO AND ALEXANDRIA, BUT RADIO LINK TO EUROPE WAS MAINTAINED. ALL OF THIS HAS BROUGHT ABOUT A SENSE OF RELAXATION. BLACKOUT, AT ITS MAXIMUM ABOUT 75 PERCENT TOTAL, HAS BEEN REDUCED TO ABOUT 50 TO 60 PERCENT. CONFIDENTIAL

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MANY CAIRO STREETS REMAIN AGLARE AT NIGHT, AND MAJOR HOTELS LUMINESCE BLUELY IN THE CAIRO EVENING AS INDOOR LIGHTS SHINE THROUGH NEWLY PAINTED WINDOWS. THE FEW OTHER SIGNS OF WAR VISIBLE TO CITY RESIDENTS ARE PASSAGE OF MILITARY VEHICLES AND THE HUM OF SOVIET TURBO-PROP AIRCRAFT ARRIVING AND DEPARTING CAIRO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON THEIR RESUPPLY MISSION. IN SHORT, CAIRO IS VERY MUCH TODAY AS IT WAS ON OCTOBER 5.

3. ONE MAJOR RESULT OF EGYPTIAN SUCCESSES AND THE SENSE OF NORMALITY AND OPTIMISM IS THAT SADAT'S POLITICAL POSITION HAS BEEN STRONGLY REINFORCED. EGYPTIANS AT ALL LEVELS TODAY SAY THAT WHATEVER KIND OF HYPOCRITE THEIR PRESIDENT WAS, HE HAS NOW PROVED HIMSELF. HEYKAL, OFTEN A WEATHERVANE, HAS COME DOWN FLATLY ON SADAT'S SIDE. OTHER EDUCATED EGYPTIANS, INCLUDING LEFTISTS, ARE SAYING THE SAME THING. ONE WELL-KNOWN INTELLECTUAL, LEWIS AWAD, PERHAPS ONE OF EGYPT'S STRONGEST MINDS, HAS TOLD A FOREIGN DIPLOMAT THAT THIS WEEK HE LOVES SADAT FOR THE SAME REASON THAT HE HATED HIM A WEEK AGO. THE EMOTION IS NOT TOO STRONGLY EXPRESSED. MANY EGYPTIANS WHO HAVE HARBORED DEEP RESENTMENT AGAINST A FATE WHICH HAS SEEMINGLY WITHHELD JUSTICE, NOW FEEL A SENSE OF ENORMOUS RELIEF. SADAT HAS BEEN THE INSTRUMENT OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENT, AND IT IS IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO HEAR THE PRIVATE OUTPOURINGS OF PRAISE FOR HIM.

4. MOST IMPORTANT, SADAT IS NOW CREDIBLE. HE HAS DELIVERED EGYPT TO A WAR AS HE PROMISED WITHOUT LEADING THE COUNTRY INTO IMMEDIATE DEFEAT. A CAREFULLY CONTROLLED AND HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED INFORMATION POLICY WHICH FOR THE MOST PART HAS GIVEN REASONABLY CORRECT NEWS AND HAS NOT ANTICIPATED UNREALIZABLE VICTORIES (AS SO OFTEN OCCURRED IN THE PAST) HAS CREATED WIDESPREAD BELIEF AMONG EGYPTIANS THAT THEY ARE BEING TOLD THE TRUTH. SADAT APPEARS TO BE THE BENEFICIARY OF THIS, TOO.

5. FROM ALL EVIDENCE, EGYPT AND SADAT APPEAR ABLE TO PERSEVERE WITHOUT TROUBLE AS LONG AS MILITARY SITUATION DOES NOT DETERIORATE.

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